Assess the view that the most important obstacle to the extension of trade union and labour rights between 1865 and 1992 was the resistance of the employers. 60

**Key factors:**

* The economy
* Structure of the workforce
* Divisions in workforce
* Organisation of labour – understanding the strength in numbers
* Employers
* War
* Politics

**The given factor:**

The story: Obstacle up until FDR’s New Deal. Broken until return as an obstacle in 1980s.

**Is it the most important?**

You could make an argument that only out of a combination of Political necessity at a unique economic time do labour and union rights advance.

Political expediency: Cleveland (Pullman) – FDR – Reagan

Employers: Homestead – Welfare capitalism – Pullman Porters – Ford – 1980s

Divisions: Closed shops – Race – immigration – White collar/blue collar – Air Traffic Control

Organisation – Closed Shop – AFL – Wobblies – AFL-CIO – PATCO

Economy: Exploitation of westward expansion – 20s – Depression – New Deal – 50s/60s – 70s recession – 80s boom

Killer point: break the distinction between Labour and Union rights post 60s. No extension of union rights and easy to fend off by employers because of economic and social factors. But there continues to be individual improvement from federal level (but only small – increased minimum pay).